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MOUNTAINS OF THE BIBLE

J. J. SUMMERBELL

Harvard Divinity School

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MOUNTAINS OF THE BIBLE

BY

J. J. SUMMERBELL

Author of "Scripture Doctrine," "Life and Writings of N. Summerbell," "Outline of Church History of the First Six Centuries," etc.

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1912

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TO

MY WIFE

ISABELLA F. V. SUMMERBELL

WHOSE INCENTIVE AND ASSISTANCE MADE

THE WORK OF THIS BOOK A DELIGHT

INTRODUCTION

A few weeks ago I was reading a late address of the great mountain climber of the Himalaya Mountains, and was fascinated by the charm of his modesty, as well as that natural attraction which the overcoming of difficulties always presents. He stated that he believed that the top of the highest peak there could never be reached by climbing.

It is unnecessary to repeat his convincing scientific reasoning. But the mere statement of his opinion excited the desire to prove that it could be done; that is, that he was in error in announcing that anything was impossible, that depended on endurance of suffering or on foresight and endeavor.

There are mountains more important than the Himalayas; some of those mentioned in the Bible. They have interest from their height and from their associations. And some of them are very hard to climb. But when the summit of a certain one of them is reached, the spiritual athlete is nearer the Great White Throne than he may be who first reaches the top of Everest.

Let us take a trip to these mountains of the Bible, without leaving our quiet, comfortable

homes; taking down a book here and there from our library shelves, and studying the maps and the records of travel and history. It is an age of excursions. This trip will not cost us anything worth saving; only that which it is advantageous to lose. The best guide book may be the Holy Bible. Let us yield to the gentle influence, and subdue somewhat the desire for mere adventure.

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ARARAT

We need not stop at Ararat: for the Bible itself does not speak of any single mountain as that memorable stepping stone from the antediluvian world to the new; the language of the Bible describing the ark as resting "upon the mountains of Ararat"; as if Ararat were then a region, rather than a mountain.

And this wise arrangement of Providence has so well prevented the idolatry that would probably have resulted from certainty as to the peak, that mountains as far apart as those of the Caucasus, Ceylon, Armenia, Afghanistan and northern India, have been selected as the one from which Noah's family descended.

But if we accept the double peak in Armenia, whose highest point is 17,230 feet above the sea, capped with eternal ice and snow, not scaled until 1829 by Dr. Parrot, as the right mountain, we will have legend and tradition to support us. The conical symmetry and sunlight glory of this mountain, looking from whose sides other mountains seem like hills, make it appear like a landmark; and we can easily imagine that from its foothills the tide of migration naturally flowed early southward to the fertile plains of Babel.

But "Ararat," on which the ark of Noah rested, was not a single mountain, and is not so referred to in the Bible. I believe the word "Ararat" occurs in but one other place (Jer. 51: 27), reading thus:—

"Call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz."

Since writing the foregoing I looked into a great religious cyclopedia for the word, and find that it is not treated at all.

HOREB

Let us now go to Horeb, the "Mount of God," between the two arms of the Red Sea, one of which the Israelites crossed by the help of God in their escape from the bondage of Egypt. It was there that God gave the ten commandments to men, by the hand of Moses. It is the mountain to which Elijah went forty days and forty nights, in his great flight from the land where his duty lay. And it was there that God asked him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Generations earlier, Moses, who also had fled from the land of duty, after having killed an Egyptian, led his flocks nearer the foot of this mountain, and saw a bush that burned with fire and was not consumed.

It is distinguished as no other height in the history of the world, except Mt. Calvary, and that other elevation where Jesus delivered the discourse called the Sermon on the Mount.

How strange it is that the exact location of these mountains is somewhat uncertain; although events happened on them that have influenced the destinies of the world more than any other! It must be that the same Jehovah that has ever veiled his face, the same Jehovah that

prevented any likeness of his Son Jesus from being preserved by his disciples, has carefully kept uncertain to us the exact places of the ratification of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant; influenced by the same motives that caused him to keep secret the grave of his servant Moses.

But the tract in which Horeb of Sinai must have stood is a wild, dreary and barren region. There are crags and precipices, separated by sandy defiles so narrow that they seem to make the opposing cliffs frown on each other; all desolate and terrific. There are springs and streams flowing among the crags, where, probably, the thousands of Israelites, while waiting for the law, secured water for their flocks and herds. Some traveler, whose name I have forgotten, without doubt concerning this part of Arabia Petraea, said, "It would seem as if Arabia Petraea had once been an ocean of lava, and while its waves were running mountains high, it was suddenly commanded to stand still."

Thus, blackened peaks of naked granite, stand sentinel over sheer precipices more than a thousand feet in height. In one place we may pass through a wild defile into a level plain, two miles long by two-thirds of a mile wide. Here we may assume that Sinai frowns down: for the conditions of the Bible history may here be

met. The plain comes to the foot of the abrupt mountain, that might be "touched," or not, according to the commandment of the Lord. The desolate cliffs surrounding this space, so suitable for a camp for many thousands, must have lent help to Moses in his effort to bring the Israelites into the disposition of awe and reverence, suitable for receiving the law that has become the "constitution of the civilized world."

Since writing the foregoing, I have found, in the pages of the "Common People" portion of the "*Christian*," of Boston, in its issue of April, 1911, probably from the pen of the son of my friend, H. L. Hastings, the following matter, which may further illustrate the peculiarities of the mountain:—

"THE MOUNT OF GOD. . . . Few spots on the face of the earth are invested with such deep and solemn interest as that barren mountain peak where Moses talked with God,

'When he proclaimed his holy law,
And struck the trembling tribes with awe.'

"Nearly in the center of the now desolate peninsula which stretches between the projecting horns of the Red Sea, stands a triangular ledge of granite, grünstein, and porphyry rocks, rising between 8,000 and 9,000 feet above the level of the sea, and stretching over an extent of from twenty to

thirty miles, rising at different points into lofty peaks. In the northwesterly portion there are the five peaks or heights of Serbal, 6,342 feet above the level of the sea. Eastward of this, some twenty miles, is Jebel Katherin, rising to the height of 8,163 feet above the sea level. Beside this is Jebel Musa, or Moses' Mount, about 7,000 feet above the level of the sea; and a little to the north of this rises Ras-es-Sufsafeh, one of the grandest of all the desert peaks.

"There have been differences of opinion as to the particular mountain on which the law was given, but the doubts seem now well nigh dispelled, and travelers recognize one mountain which possesses all the natural features described in connection with the giving of the law. It was a 'mount that might be touched,' or to the base of which the multitude could approach, unless fenced away; and it must have been a mountain having an area in front of it sufficiently large to give room for the vast multitude of the Israelites who gazed upon the tremendous scene, when the mountain was 'altogether on a smoke.'"

The mountain in which we are interested is probably that now called by the Arabs Ras-es-Sufsafeh.

From the higher parts of these mountains can be seen arms of the Red Sea, a part of Egypt, whose mighty army had so lately disappeared in the waters, and territory within a few days' journey of Jerusalem. I have

sometimes wondered if Moses, when looking from those high peaks, did not gaze fixedly and long into Egypt (with that eye that even forty years afterward was "not dim"), to discover the movements of new Egyptian armies that might be mobilized and hurried this time to compass the Gulf of Suez, and fall upon the Hebrews while still in this desolate region between the two arms of the Red Sea, to bring them back again into bondage. For on these heights Moses spent days and weeks, during which the Egyptians might have gathered fresh troops for a new pursuit of the Israelites, had not the terrible calamity to the military related in the book of Exodus awed the nation into deep fear of their escaped slaves lingering mysteriously so long so near their borders.

On these peaks, from which Moses might look into Egypt, he lingered long and often. But probably it was only now and then that he looked into the land of bondage: for around him the trumpet was sounding, the lightning was flashing, and the thunder of God was rolling. From the midst of scenes of sublimity the ten commandments were coming. Here probably was Sinai; no forest or villages among its black crags, towering upward 7,500 feet, or more. The mountain rose abruptly from the plain; but must not be "touched." The awe of the Israelites, caused by that com-

mandment combined with the trumpet blasts, the lightning flashes and the thunder roars of the mountain, gradually died away in the long waiting for Moses to come down. Though the mountain smoked and trembled, and the glory of the Lord covered it, imperceptibly the feelings of fear in the hearts of the Israelites died away, and the merely carnal sense asserted itself in the thought that all the impressive phenomena of the mountain were only the effect of natural causes; and it may have seemed to the people that possibly Moses himself, in the mountain's convulsions (that might reasonably be attributed to volcanic activity, as far as they knew), might have lost his life.

At least, the Israelites wearily said, "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." The time had been so long! They forgot that before Moses brought them to Horeb, he had smitten the rock at Rephidim, not far away, and water had come for them and their flocks in time of need. They did not reason that the God who had been their salvation in distress, would continue to protect them; they "knew not what had become of" Moses. They had trusted in man, and the man had disappeared. Man will always disappear, if he is our final reliance. If we trust in man, or his sciences, or his achievements, or

his riches, or his intellect, or his prestige, the time will come of weariness, of loss and bewilderment. The Israelites had lost Moses. They made a golden calf, and worshiped it at the foot of Horeb, on whose heights Moses was communing with the Lord.

But Moses returned. He ground the calf to powder. The fury of the prophet subdued the people again. And there they stayed, at the foot of the mountain, though they had made a god to go before them. They stayed at the foot of that mounain; they who wanted to travel; they who were progressive and modern. They knew that the most learned men of Egypt honored calves. They felt like being learned and cultured; and desired to escape from the superstition of honoring God, whose existence they could not prove by material demonstrations. To honor an invisible God seemed so much like believing in ghosts and fairies; and they chose to worship something material. That was the real reason why they had made a golden calf.

But Moses ground it to powder, and made them drink it. He gave them solid (liquid) proof that they had just had a god. And then he left them again and went up into the mountain. And they had nothing that they could see, that they could worship: for Moses in his anger at their making a god, whose existence

could scientifically be proved, dashed against the rocks the tables of divine law he had brought down.

But later, Moses came again down from that mountain with law on stone; "a law cloud-embroidered; a law fire-begirt"; a law stony in terms, angular with negatives, like a bullet in its directness of piercing. It did not carry along in itself the proof that it had come from God; but it was not unworthy of God. And if that law of Horeb were everywhere obeyed the human family would live on a level not far below the angels, and the world would again become the garden of Eden.

And Mount Horeb, with all its desolation, shines with the glory of the decalogue. The earth is illuminated with Sinai's stony brightness. Its beams and rays shine over all Christian lands, made softer and sweeter year by year and century after century by the radiance descending from Calvary's lowly height, that somehow seems to mingle and temper and subdue Horeb's stony glare; so that the law of stone becomes a commandment of affection. And we can more easily walk in heaven's light shining through the loving death of Jesus.

Now let us go to Mount Nebo and Mount Hor; and go more slowly and tread more softly; for they are the death chambers of two prophets, Aaron and Moses.

MOUNT HOR

If a traveler wished to go from Mount Sinai, or Horeb, to visit the mountain where Moses died, he would probably arrange his journey in such a way as to pass by Mount Hor, where Aaron, the brother of Moses, died, no matter which one of the two mountains in our time named by critics be accepted as the correct one. For both mountains claimed by the critics to be Mount Hor fulfill the conditions of the Bible history as closely as would be reasonable after the lapse of thousands of years. Both mountains have bold and striking appearance on approaching them; and the modern traveler, moving through ridges of light drifting sand, or over surfaces made uneven by stones, would frequently ask himself if the Hebrews in the time of Aaron endured such hardships.

We do not stop to discuss which of the two mountains is the correct one: for in either case Mount Hor is the conspicuous one for a long distance.

As the Christian traveler would approach, he would draw forth his pocket Bible, and read the following dignified and impressive account, in Numbers 20: 22-29, of the death of Aaron:—

"And they journeyed from Kadesh: and the

children of Israel, even the whole congregation, came unto Mount Hor. And Jehovah spake unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor, by the border of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them unto Mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son, and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there. And Moses did as Jehovah commanded: and they went up into Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they wept for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel."

Aaron was at his death one hundred and twenty three years old. It does not appear that he died of old age, nor of nervous prostration; but at the command of the Lord; like a child falling asleep in the arms of its mother. He went up into the mountain to die, and died. His high priest's garments he would need no more; and he suffered Moses to remove them. Possibly with his own fingers he adjusted them on Eleazar becomingly; while doing so, giving advice concerning their care.

He had served as priest a full generation. He had been ready of tongue, when Moses was slow of speech. He had gone with his brother into the land of Egypt before the greatest monarch of what was then the western world, and demanded that a race of slaves be allowed to escape. But yet he had been so dependent on the integrity of Moses, his younger brother, that when he had been deprived of his help for a time, as at Sinai, he had yielded to the materialistic reasonings of the Hebrews, who had already lost their belief in the miracles and providence of an invisible God, and made them a golden calf. In all ages human beings easily lose their touch with invisible truth. This is what is to be expected of the animal life, or the carnal. Dogs do not believe in God. Swine, as far as we understand them, do not have prophets. Saloon-keepers do not keep open Bibles on the bar. And the nearer man comes to living the life of the brute, the less inclined he is to obey the prophet; though more inclined to superstitions based on the direction of the new moon from his right shoulder, or the hedgehog's shadow on February 2d. . . . Yes; Aaron had made for the Hebrews a golden calf: for Moses their prophet had disappeared, and their Jehovah was invisible.

But it does not, from the narrative in Numbers, appear that the Lord treasured up for

vengeance the idolatry of the golden calf; but, at the waters of Meribah, Moses and Aaron had possibly assumed to themselves a power in bringing water from the rock for the people to drink that obscured the glory that should have gone solely to that One who is really able to work a miracle. The *divine* act was not emphasized, and Moses and Aaron seemed as if bringing water from the rock by some physical blow of their own.

Seldom, in the history of mankind, has any man who has had the help of God ignored that help and allowed the people to believe that the wonderful work was human. Usually men do the reverse: and attribute to the divine that which is merely human. But in this connection we are reminded of that other class of mankind: those who do not have the help of God because of their worldly spirit, or real sinfulness. In their malice, or hate of spiritual forces, these real enemies of righteousness, when a great and good work is done for humanity by the Spirit of God, attribute it to evil agencies. This is the sin against the Holy Ghost; in its very nature an insult to God. It says to God, This wonder is not the gift of thy love, but is the work of the devil. It is easily seen that this is a dangerous sin.

But it is always dangerous to ignore the dignity or honor of the Most High. And at the

waters of Meribah when Aaron seemed to the Israelites to perform the wonder, which really God's mercy had given to the thirsty people, he did not immediately turn the thought of the people to their divine Deliverer. This was displeasing to heaven. God demands his own honor. Everything, in the final analysis, depends on God. Everything, in the beginning, has sprung from God. Such reasons made it necessary for God to make the first commandment to refer to himself: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." "In the beginning, God!"

But Aaron was neglectful of the divine Helper. Therefore he was forbidden to enter the promised land. What a sweet privilege it would have been for him to have gone in with the people he loved, and seen the land flowing with milk and honey; where long before Abraham had led his flocks and fought his battles. It was in that land, on Mount Moriah, that Abraham, in obedience to the mysterious command of God, had been about to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, when his hand was stayed, and God provided the victim. How strange it has been that some of the most exalted experiences of the most spiritual servants of God have been connected with the mountains!

And Aaron was to die on Mount Hor. He was a man of quick speech and ready tongue;

but he made no reply when he heard the sentence of Jehovah.

There was another time when Aaron held his peace under judgment of the Most High:—

At the time of the consecration of the tabernacle, his sons, Nadab and Abihu, had offered strange fire before Jehovah, "which he had not commanded them." And fire came forth from before Jehovah and killed them. Then Moses uttered words explaining the punishment of Aaron's sons. But Aaron made no reply; he "held his peace." So now he is silent.

Clad in his dignified robes of office as high priest, serene and composed, with his brother Moses, and his own son Eleazar, he ascends the mountain, in the sight of all the people. His life has proved to him one thing; that God must be obeyed. The ascent of the mountain is exceedingly steep and toilsome; but Aaron makes no protest, though he is one hundred and twenty three years old, and now going to his own funeral. He makes no plea to die at ease in his tent; but obedient now as a child he goes with Moses and Eleazar to the top of the mountain. There his garments are removed and placed on the son. In the camp of Israel many hearts must have ached as he climbed the mountain, and many lips must have blessed him. With all his faults he was their own priest. Many of his faults were their faults. Nothwith-

standing them, he was one who a generation before had boldly entered the palace of Pharaoh, to demand their freedom. He had been on their side all the way along, from the time when Moses undertook to deliver them. Their grief for their great high priest was made more intense at the foot of Mount Hor by the thought that in the years now ending there had been times when they had been so impatient with him that they were ready to stone him. But now the multitudes gazed at the sides and top of Mount Hor in deep silence, with earnest grief, and reverential awe. For Aaron is dying—is ascending. His death-bed is a mountain. His canopy is the sky. Stripped of his official garments, his last look is not from some human window, asking relatives to stand aside to let him see once more the green meadow and the winding river; but he looks from the mountain top over a barren desert south of the Dead Sea. If he sees, west of the Dead Sea, the low lying mountains of the south of Judea, it is not mentioned: for Mount Hor is the more interesting this day, since Aaron dies there. Mount Hor is his death-bed and his tomb.

MOUNT NEBO

If Mount Hor, where Aaron died, attracted a languid interest, notwithstanding the uncertainty as to the identity of the elevation up which the Israelites saw him go with his brother and son, that interest will possibly be greater when we search for the peak from which the great Moses viewed the promised land before he died. On almost any expedition from Mount Hor to Mount Nebo, or Pisgah, which is over against Jericho, among frightful, rocky, precipitous hills, we might leave the Dead Sea at our left. That body of water must be mentioned, as an important part of the landscape, with all its depressing influence. Lying 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, no refreshing breeze helps the traveler. Its water is so salt that the spray kills ordinary vegetation, notwithstanding the great heat. Desolation is the appropriate word for most of the scenery here. The effect of it can be understood from the following description of Lieut. Lynch, of one of his experiences during his exploration:—

"A light air from the south induced me to abandon the awning, and I set the sail, to save the men from laboring at the oars. A light tapping of the

ripple of the bow, and a faint line of foam, and bubbles at her side, were the only indications that the boat was in motion. The other boat was a mile astern, and all around partook of the stillness of death. The weather was intensely hot, and even the light air that urged us almost insensibly, had something oppressing in its flaws of heat. . . .

"The glitter from the water, with its multitude of reflections (for each ripple was a mirror), contributed much to our discomfort; yet the water was not transparent, but of the color of diluted absinthe. The black chasms and rock peaks, embossed with grimness, were around and above us, veiled in a transparent mist, like visible air, that made them seem unreal; and 1,300 feet below, our sounding lead had struck upon the very plain of Siddim, shrouded in slime and salts. While busy with such thoughts, my companions had yielded to the oppressive drowsiness and now lay before me in every attitude of a sleep that had more of stupor in it than of repose. In the awful aspect which this sea presented, when we first beheld it, I seemed to read the inscription over the gates of Dante's Inferno, 'Ye who enter here leave hope behind.' Now, as I sat alone in my wakefulness, the feeling of awe returned: and as I looked upon the sleepers, I felt the hair of my flesh stand up as Job's did" . . . (Lynch was wrong; this was Eliphaz the Temanite) . . . "when a spirit passed before his face; for to my disturbed imagination, there was something fearful in the expression of their inflamed and swollen visages. The fierce angel of disease seemed hovering over

them, and I read the forerunner of his presence in their flushed and feverish sleep. The solitude, the scene, my own thoughts, were too much; I felt, as I sat thus steering the drowsily moving boat, as if I were Charon ferrying not the souls, but the bodies of the departed and the damned, over some infernal lake, and could endure it no longer; but breaking from my listlessness, ordered the sails to be furled and the oars resumed; action seemed better than such unnatural stupor." (Travels and Adventures, pp. 219-220.)

Along such depressing scenes, or among rocks and hills appropriately encompassing such waters, Moses may have passed during the last days of his earthly life. And such scenes may have served to increase his mental or spiritual depression, caused by God's sentence upon him for his sin at the waters of Meribah; that he should not enter the Promised Land with the beloved people whom he had led to its border.

Moses felt deeply this sentence of his God. Like a child, petted by a loving father, he plead with God to change the decree. How often he importuned his heavenly Father we do not know; but it was so often that God at last told him to quit, to cease; like a mother wearied by the teasing of a petted child. For we read the following complaint of Moses about it, to the children of Israel, when he attributes his misfortune, in part, to them:—

"And I besought Jehovah at that time, saying, O Lord Jehovah, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy strong hand: for what god is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy work, and according to thy mighty acts? Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But Jehovah was wroth with me for your sakes, and hearkened not unto me; and Jehovah said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up unto the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see" (Deut. 3:23-28).

Thus his teasing of God had no success, although God loved him so. God told him to stop talking about it; but he comforted his child, by promising to let him see the land from a distance.

We may easily understand that Moses stopped talking about it, when he received from God the command we have quoted; that is, stopped talking to God about it, although he told his sorrow to the people.

And when the time came for the people to cross over, and for Moses to die, he received

the following stern, final command from God:

"Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto Mount Nebo which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho, and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither into the land which I give the children of Israel" (Deut. 32:49-52).

Moses had been a lawgiver to the Israelites; their commander in chief in battle; the ambassador at Pharaoh's court; the messenger of God in miracles; their bard of almost divine imagination; their preëminent statesman in administration; their judge when they sinned; their uncrowned king, whose scepter was the rod that parted the waves of the Red Sea. For forty years he had been their leader and savior. Often they had rebelled against him, and as often been subdued to humiliating submission. His tongue had lashed them in rebuke; and had more sweetly commanded them to teach his law to their children. With a prophet's confidence he had assured them of

the Promised Land, and for a generation had led them to and fro in a wilderness, where their hopes were encouraged or disappointed, only in less degree than his own.

And now, as the time approaches when they are about to enter, Moses is commanded to look and die.

Does this mean, that for the truly great, life is a tragedy? Does it mean, after John the Baptist has clearly pointed out "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and proved himself the greatest of men, that he must die in prison on account of the hatred of an insignificant woman whom he had accused of sin? Does it mean that when Paul has fought the good fight he must be "ready to be offered?" Does it mean that when Stephen has borne his great witness he must fall "asleep" under a shower of stones? Does it mean that as soon as Jesus has fully founded his kingdom he must be crowned with thorns and throned on a cross?

No; it only means that God knows of better things than earthly triumphs. God can afford to let his children suffer for a time, because he is great enough to set things right, no matter what the disaster of earth may be. God is wise enough to make "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of

glory." God says, "Let there be light."

Therefore, knowing the greatness of God as few men of earth have done, Moses obeyed without a murmur. His sister, Miriam, the prophetess, is dead. His brother, Aaron, the high priest, is dead. Moses, 120 years old, but with eye undimmed and his natural strength unabated turns to the children of Israel and blesses them, assuring them that "under them are the everlasting arms." From the plains of Moab, where they are encamped, he goes with steady step to Nebo, over against Jericho, and Jehovah shows him the land of Canaan, north and south, east and west; from the Waters of Merom to the brine of the Dead Sea; from the "palm trees" of Jericho and east of there, to the vineyards of Ashkelon on the west.

I have often imagined that Moses' undimmed eye had greater help than physical keenness: for in vain so far have travelers sought a peak over against Jericho, whence they could see all Canaan, even to Merom and the Mediterranean.

When Moses told the awestruck Israelites that he was going to the top of Pisgah to survey the length and breadth of the Promised Land, of which he had so often talked to them, and that God would give him a vision of Canaan before they could see it, and that God

would give clear sight of all the land to his six score years old eyes, and then tenderly close them in death, because he had sinned at Meribah, many a stalwart soldier must have felt his heart beat with dread, and many a maiden must have caught her breath in pity.

They saw him go away from the camp; they saw him climb the heights. They knew that all he had told them would come to pass: for his every prediction for two score years had been fulfilled.

And so Moses looked at Canaan. Then God closed his eyes, kissed away his breath, and buried him.

MOUNT HERMON

FIRST CHRISTIAN PRAYER MEETING

Going northward from Mount Nebo, where Moses died, all the time keeping the River Jordan, the Sea of Galilee and the Waters of Merom at our left, we reach the city of Cæsarea Philippi, near which Jesus was determined to question his disciples concerning his greatness. The heavenly answer sprang to the lips of Peter, that Jesus was "the Son of the living God," the Christ.

When at the baptism of Jesus a similar heavenly statement was made as he was coming up out of the water, he was immediately driven into the wilderness by the Spirit, and was tempted by Satan. After the statement of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus was again tempted; but this time by that disciple who opposed Jesus' prophecy of the coming crucifixion so dangerously that Jesus rebuked him and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan"; probably thinking of that former temptation of the wilderness following the baptism, and the same doctrine there stated. From Cæsarea Philippi Jesus went northward, practically to the extreme of the Holy Land, to one of its highest mountains, Mount Hermon, and there

prayed and was transfigured before his three favorite disciples, who now heard from the glory cloud the statement of Peter made a week before. (The opinion that he was transfigured on Mount Tabor is a mistake.)

On this Mount Hermon, at the edge of the Promised Land, two great characters appeared and talked with Jesus of the "departure which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Moses, on another mountain, Mount Nebo, during one of the sweetest seasons of his life, had been with God, preparing for his own departure from earth. Now on Mount Hermon he talked with the Son of God concerning his departure. Another great prophet also was at Mount Hermon: Elijah, who at Mount Horeb had talked with God; Elijah, who at Mount Carmel had fought his great duel with the prophets of Baal; Elijah, who took his departure from earth by the whirlwind, with horses and chariot of fire, tempestuously, according to his disposition, from the same mountainous region, over against Jericho, where Jehovah gently nursed Moses to sleep. These two men, of high ecstatic experiences on mountains, and of singular departures from earth, on Mount Hermon talked with the Son of God of *his* departure which he was to accomplish from Mount Calvary.

And here they were talking on a mountain,

and talking in glory. And Jesus was clothed in glory. Jesus had gone up there to pray, possibly against temptation. Whether he had gone beyond the snow line of the elevation rising more than 9,000 feet toward the sky we have no way to know; but he certainly in spirit came near to heaven: for they all heard a voice, a heavenly voice, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." There was another time when Jesus was on "an exceeding high mountain," but there he was tempted; being shown the "kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," and was offered them as a bribe to compromise and use his powers in harmony with popularity and worldliness. And his only companion on that "exceeding high mountain" was the devil.

But on Mount Hermon the company was more delightful: Peter, James, John, Moses, Elijah, and the Shekinah, from which came the heavenly Voice announcing the sonship of Jesus. Blessed company! a company the most select of the universe! a company gathered from heaven and earth, come to the Christian prayer-meeting! Not very many of them, only seven; but Jesus was "in the midst of them!"

Again consider that company on Mount Hermon.

There was the great apostle, Peter. He was a type of one class of Christians: the impul-

sive, the emotional, the ready; ready at one hour to fight for Jesus, and at another hour ready to curse and swear, denying him; but yet in the end dying for him. We cannot spare the Peters of Christianity, even though they may sometimes backslide. For it was Peter who said, "God is no respector of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

And there was the apostle James. He was a type of another kind of Christian: the steady, the faithful, the burden-bearer; the kind that can always be relied on, the pillar in the church. We need such men as James, to sustain the work of the church when the Peters grow cold or lukewarm in the service. It was James, probably, who said, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

The third type of Christian there was John, the beloved disciple; the loving, affectionate Christian; drawn to the service of the Master by his heart; preserving for humanity those tender words of Jesus, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John was the man,

the humble fisherman of Galilee, who anticipated by many centuries the vaunted discovery of modern theologians concerning the disposition or character of God, and said, "God is love."

Those three living men, apostles of Jesus, were types of the Christian world. They had not yet departed from the earth; and in amazement were listening to the conversation of two other men, who appeared in glory, and were talking with Jesus of his departure, "which he should accomplish from Jerusalem."

And those two men, Moses and Elijah, were types also, as well as the three apostles.

Moses was the great lawgiver of the world; Elijah the great prophet.

Moses' departure from the world had been peculiar, and here on Mount Hermon he talked about Jesus' departure, so different from his own, when on Mount Nebo he was alone with God, quietly falling asleep in Jehovah's arms. I wonder if Jesus told him of the coming crucifixion, as he had told his disciples, of the slanders hurled against him, of blasphemy, or treason; of the ribald gibes of the Jews about his "making himself the Son of God, and coming down from the cross that they might believe on him." If so, Moses must have recalled his own sweet departure, cared for so tenderly by Jesus' Father, on quiet Pisgah, after he

had looked over the Promised Land, while God's only Son died on a cross, in the midst of jeering enemies, with no one to say a kind word to him except a dying thief.

And Moses was a favored one of God; a favorite; one so petted by the Almighty that he sometimes spoke to God in resistance or opposition to the revealed divine purposes.

Once God asked Moses to let him alone in his anger with the Israelites on account of their sin, announcing to Moses his plan to destroy them, promising to raise up of Moses himself "a great nation." Moses was so familiar with the eternal Monarch that he dared to resist this purpose, expostulating, and appealing to God's mercy. And a little later he cried out, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin," . . . . and in his grief for Israel could not finish that prayer, but broke down; and as soon as he could recover himself he cried, "If not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Thus Moses, in the familiar affection of an intimate friend, dared God to destroy the sinners, professing desire to share their fate. What could God do to the Israelites but spare them, when Moses loved them so? How this spirit of love for sinners reminds us of Jesus' own prayer on Calvary, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And now this Moses,

this lawgiver, who left the world in a peculiar way, is talking on Mount Hermon with Jesus, of "his departure which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

Peter, James, John, Moses . . . four.

There was another typical man on Mount Hermon, Elijah the prophet.

He was also a man whom God loved so much that he bore with his failings indulgently; like a father with a petted child. Once he ran away from the land of Israel, from the country where his duty lay, down to Horeb in the wilderness. On the way he became tired, and lay down, and wished to die. God's angel woke him, showed him food; and without reproving him for running away from Jezebel when God was taking care of him, told him to rise and eat, for the journey was too great for him. When he got down to Horeb, and considered himself safely hidden from the wrath of the wicked queen, whose theologians and doctors of divinity he had killed, the voice of conscience translated to him the question of God, in the "still small voice," "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Petulantly, like the spoiled child that he was, he answered, that he had done nothing wrong, that he had a right to be there in Horeb, excusing himself, saying, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, God of hosts: be-

cause the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

But still conscience speaks to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" And he knows that "still, small voice" to be the question of God to him; whether he stands at the entering in of the cave, or hides in its thick darkness. And wherever he replies to God, it is with the cry of the petted child, claiming that he is afraid for his life; that he has been a good boy, that he "has been jealous for the Lord, God of hosts," and that they seek his life, to take it away. He is the "pet" of Jehovah. How like a child he talks to God!

But when God tells him to "Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria," Elijah, again being given something to do, makes no protest, but obeys his God, starting on the dangerous mission.

And when it came to the time of his departure from the earth, he did not die at all, he who had been so afraid to die, but ascended from the presence of Elisha in a whirlwind, with a chariot and horses of fire. God did not let him die at all; he loved him so. . . . . And now on Mount Hermon this loved servant

of God is talking with that other loved one, Jesus, of *his* departure.

Peter, James, John, Moses, Elijah . . . five. And of the five, two are pets of the Lord.

And while those two, Moses and Elijah, are talking with Jesus . . . Oh! Jesus; that makes six, so far, at this prayer-meeting on Mount Hermon, where Moses and Elijah talk with Jesus of his coming singular departure from earth's activities, joys and sorrows.

And there comes another one . . . God; making the sacred number, seven, at this first Christian prayer-meeting.

For a bright cloud overshadowed the six, and a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

And this voice makes us know that there were three favorites of God there, Moses, Elijah and Jesus, all having singular departures from earth; to which each one was directly commanded by God.

And the impression of that meeting fell upon the hearts of the disciples like showers of divine blessings, to make them fruitful and strong in later life; so that Peter, long afterward, said, "And this voice we heard out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount" (2 Pet. 1:18.)

Even material Mount Hermon was a locality

where physical dews descended in such fullness as to attract the attention of travelers in modern times. Mr. Maundrel says: "With this dew, even in dry weather, their tents were as wet as if it had rained the whole night." But nineteen centuries ago a tent was there, made of the glory of the Father's presence, from which the comforting and refreshing dews of divine grace sank into the hearts of those who "entered into the cloud"; Peter, James, John, Moses, Elijah, Jesus; that blessed company, reminding us of the 133d psalm:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!
It is like the precious oil upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard,
Even Aaron's beard;
That came down upon the skirts of his garments;
Like the dew of Hermon,
That cometh down upon the mountains of Zion:
For there Jehovah commanded the blessing,
Even life forevermore."

LEBANON

Let us leave Mount Hermon, with its great height made sacred by the transfiguration of Jesus; let us cross the valley, going westward, still refraining from entering the heart of the Holy Land. While at a distance, looking at the range commonly called Mount Lebanon, we become mildly interested in it from its splendor of color, nothwithstanding its monotony of form. The control of the full range, of possibly one hundred miles, must largely be assigned to the land of Tyre and Sidon; although its glory depends on the sacred writers of the following books of the Bible:

Deuteronomy;
Joshua;
Judges;
Kings (1st and 2nd);
2d Chronicles;
Ezra;
Psalms;
Canticles;
Isaiah;
Jeremiah;
Ezekiel;
Hosea;
Nahum;
Habakkuk;
Zechariah.

Singularly, Lebanon is not mentioned in the New Testament by name; although Jesus had one of the most pleasant experiences in the borders of Tyre and Sidon, where he said to the Syro-Phoenician woman, who had plead

with him for only a crumb dropped "under the table" by the children (the healing of her daughter), "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Yet great crowds came from Tyre and Sidon into Israel to hear his word.

The word *Lebanon* signifies *white,* and may have been given to the range, from the tint of the walls of chalk or limestone rocks, or the snow which remains on the summits even in the summer: for some peaks rise 10,000 feet. But when we speak of *Lebanon* we never now think of *white,* but of *green;* because of "the cedars of Lebanon." These cedars were so appreciated in ancient times that the kings of Assyria when making expeditions into Palestine, cut them and bore them to their far distant capitals; where, even in modern times, this wood transported so far has been found.

But the destruction of these trees in Lebanon through the ages was so cruel, that as early as the sixth century of our era the Roman emperor, Justinian the Great, the cruel persecutor of truth (in the name of truth) and destroyer of the church (in the name of the church), "found it difficult to secure cedar timber enough for the roof of a single church" building. These trees are now so few that travelers count them, and cyclopedias tell how many are left at different dates: In 1550, only

28; in 1573, only 24; in 1696, only 16; in 1749, only 15, when the traveler measured twelve of them, and found their circumferences from 22 to 40 feet, and the diameters of some of the largest about 16 feet. I have forgotten where I read it; but one traveler's report is that but five of these giants now remain. So destructive has man been of the wonderful "cedars of Lebanon," among whose groves Solomon had 80,000 men at work when he built the temple at Jerusalem. (However, one cyclopedia represents these trees as now increasing in number.)

The beauty of these cedars, before the ravages of civilization had laid the mountain slope comparatively desolate, may be imagined, or inferred, from the following words of the Psalmist (92:12-15):

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree:
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon,
They are planted in the house of Jehovah;
They shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall bring forth fruit in old age;
They shall be full of sap and green:
To show that Jehovah is upright:
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

If you read 1st Kings, 5th and 6th chapters, you will see how the "cedars of Lebanon"

entered into the building of the temple. If we were living in ancient times, undoubtedly we might mingle with the workmen of Hiram and Solomon in the mountains of Lebanon; we might observe their skill in cutting the timbers and boards for the temple; we might attend them in transporting this material to the seaport; we might then take passage on one of the rafts or floats by which the lumber was transported to the port of Japho, west of Jerusalem. If so, we would pass with idly curious eye the celebrated Mount Carmel, jutting out into the Mediterranean; where Elijah, years later, sent his servant to look out over the sea, in expectation of the cloud that would betoken rain in answer to his prayer, after he had conquered the prophets of Baal.

But on our present excursion, having knowledge of events which the builders of the temple at Jerusalem could not foresee, happening nearly a hundred years later, we will simply depart from Lebanon by land, making our way southward to Mount Carmel.

MOUNT CARMEL

DOGMA IMPORTANT

Mount Carmel, although the learned writers in cyclopedias seem to labor to lure us away from the tremendous events related in the 18th chapter of First Kings, to this day, for us derives its chief interest from those events.

And here the reader should refresh his memory, by reading again that thrilling record.

Some years before that time, Elijah the Tishbite had met Ahab, the king of Israel, and said, "As Jehovah, the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

The prophet fled immediately, and hid from the king and the people of Israel.

Years passed, and there was no rain.

Necessarily the matter became one of national importance. The threat of the prophet, and his prediction that rain would not come except according to his word, made the king and the statesmen desire to meet him. The drouth and Elijah became subjects of dominating interest.

But the years passed, there was no rain,

famine came, and in vain did the king seek for the prophet. Ambassadors were sent to foreign lands, and kings were questioned. The famine became more and more grievous, but Elijah could not be found. God was taking care of him, commanding ravens to feed him when in the wilderness for a time, and a poor widow woman in Zarephath afterward.

That famine was brought on Israel because the people had forsaken Jehovah, their true God, and joined in the idolatrous worship of the Baalim.

It is not necessary for us to enter into a description of the theology of the worshipers of the Baalim, or the various aspects, or manifestations, under which Baal was adored. But his service was popular, harmonizing with carnal appetites. The prophets who worshiped him had received their instruction from the filthy nations of heathendom; and, having respect for the instruction they had received in the schools of Baal, and from their Gentile ancestors, were undoubtedly sincere.

If, even in our time, we go to the wrong source of knowledge, turning from the law of Moses and the word of Jesus to "the doctrines and commandments of men" for instruction concerning the true God, we are in danger of religious disaster. God has made the first commandment teach his own unity, because it

is the commandment most important of all. Its violation leads to all other sins; poisoning the intellect, and making the victim unable to reason correctly. Its violation vitiates the daily life; making the sources of moral authority uncertain or vile. Its violation debases the spiritual nature: for God is spirit; and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth. In no other way can he *be truly worshiped*, or *truly be worshiped.*

It is astonishing that Christians should neglect this commandment, both in theory and practice. But they do. And in this age, when "covetousness is idolatry," Alexander McLaren D. D., in the *Sunday School Times* of May 28th, 1887, used the following language:

"The first commandment bears in its negative form marks of the condition of the world when it was spoken, and of the strong temptation to polytheism which the Israelites were to resist. Everywhere but in that corner among the wild rocks of Sinai, men believed in gods many. Egypt swarmed with them. . . . All these many gods were on amicable terms with one another, and ready to welcome new comers. But the monotheism which was here laid at the very foundation of Israel's national life, parted them by a deep gulf from all the world, and determined their history.

"The prohibition has little force for us," etc.

Oh! that there could have been an Elijah looking over McLaren's shoulder, when he wrote, "The prohibition has little force for us," to rebuke him, notwithstanding all the fine words which followed endorsing the first commandment. If Elijah had been there, he might have predicted to McLaren that there would be a famine in Christendom of the Word and Spirit of God for a quarter or half a century; that the pastors of churches would be unable to reach the masses of the working people in the cities; that so-called "revivals" would become a product of human machinery; that instead of the Spirit's working as the breathing of the wind, so that we would not know "whence it came and whither it went," we would know all about it; that the professional "evangelists" would tell us whence they would come, how long they would stay, and whither they would go; that instead of leaping on the altar, crying unto Baal, and cutting themselves with knives, they would cut out all church services but their own, make the rafters tremble with grand music, and have the congregations bow their heads and shut their eyes while sinners bravely raised their hands to confess their sins against God, or secretly signed the cards admitting that they had been serving Ashtaroth.

In all ages and in all lands, Jehovah is neg-

lected, except by those who walk with him and keep his commandments.

In the time of Israel's idolatry, God brought the famine on the land at the word of his prophet. At last God commanded Elijah to show himself to Ahab, to tell him that he would bring rain on the earth. The meeting of the king and prophet was stormy; but the king obeyed the prophet, who said to him,

"Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the Asherah four hundred, that eat at Jezebel's table.

"So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel. And Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.

"And the people answered him not a word" (1 Kings 18:19-21).

Then came that duel, lasting for hours, on Mount Carmel. The king, Ahab, had obeyed the orders of Elijah, to gather the false prophets and the people together there, near the coast of the Mediterranean, about due west from the sea of Galilee.

Mount Carmel consists of a range of hills, perhaps 1,500 or 1,600 feet high, adorned

with verdure, of fragrant wild flowers of many kinds, pines, oaks, olive and laurel trees, with brooks of clear water emptying into the Kishon. The outlook from the graceful and verdant summit is said to be beautiful, including the sea and its fertile shores, the pastures and fruit trees of the valleys, and the distant blue of the mountains of Lebanon.

On what elevation of these hills, which jut out into the Mediterranean like a promontory, the people gathered at the word of Elijah, is not known.

But there came that duel, lasting from the forenoon till the evening, in the beginning of which, when Elijah had called on the people to choose between Jehovah and Baal, "the people answered him not a word."

It was the prophet against the king; one theologian against eight hundred and fifty; one man against all Israel; one agitator against a government; duty against popularity.

But it was truth against error; it was righteousness against sin; it was Jehovah against Baal. And God took care of Elijah.

There are times when God visibly and very plainly takes care of his children. Why will men be so narrow that they cannot believe in miracle? It is not breadth of mind that sophists use to keep the infinite Chemist out

of his laboratory, the infinite Engineer away from his machine, the infinite Father from pleasing his faithful child. It is narrowness of intellect that denies the possibility of miracles. It is also narrowness of heart: for it rejects the testimony of fellow men, unless the sophist knows the event related (or something like it) independently of the witness. But he is unwise, whose only lamp is that of experience.

Elijah prayed to God, and fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice that lay on the altar that Elijah had built; the fire burnt up the stones of the altar; the fire licked up the water that was in the trench about the altar. The miracle was evident, and the people accepted Jehovah as the true God.

And Elijah prayed on Mount Carmel. He prayed for rain. The drouth had brought the famine, and the people were suffering. Elijah prayed, with his face toward the earth; and would not look out toward the west, from where the rain would come. He sent his servant to look; but the servant reported no sign of rain. But Elijah sent him back seven times. Ah! this favored child of God, this pet, will not let Jehovah alone. He keeps on asking, and asking, and asking, and asking, and asking, and asking, and asking for rain.

At last the servant reports the cloud of the

size of a man's hand; and Elijah knows that God will answer this prayer also; and he hurries to Ahab, to tell the king to hasten to his capital. And they leave Mount Carmel, racing furiously to escape from the drenching rain.

But from this time forward, Mount Carmel will be remembered with Mount Nebo, with Mount Horeb, with Mount Hermon and other heights, where the earth came near to the skies, because God's petted children there prayed to him; they who "feared God and worked righteousness."

THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES.

Although willing to tarry among the trees and flowers of Mount Carmel, made sacred by the faith of Elijah, we realize that we have not yet entered the heart of the Promised Land, where there are two or three mountains of deep interest to the follower of the Savior; and we turn our faces eastward, bearing slightly to the north; and off to the northwest of the Sea of Galilee, only a few miles west of Capernaum, there is a mountain that meets the conditions required for the Mount of Beatitudes, where the Sermon on the Mount was delivered by Jesus.

Elijah was not the only servant of God who had felt the hatred of sinners.

The animosity of Jesus' enemies had so grown that he needed his Father's help, and he went out into a mountain, where he continued all night in prayer. In the morning he called to him his disciples, chose from them twelve, and then descended to a lower plateau on the mountain, where travelers tell us there is a level space that might accommodate about 2,000 people; and there he delivered that series of "blessings," commonly called the beatitudes.

The Sermon on the Mount, of which they

are the opening sentences, is one of the most remarkable productions preserved by human beings. Merely from the intellectual point of view, it makes that mountain shine with eternal splendor; and men have been for centuries picturing the disciples and the multitudes crowding around Jesus and breathlessly listening to utterances that have nothing like them, even in feeble degree, since the old Hebrew prophets closed their lips, except the stirring words of John the Baptist. Any of the following points of the Sermon on the Mount would have made any literary writer or platform orator, of any age, immortal:—the beatitudes; the parable of the two builders (on rock and sand); the Golden Rule; the doctrine of moral perfection; the defense of the "law and the prophets"; the "Lord's Prayer"; "love your enemies"; "swear not at all"; give and pray secretly; "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"; "consider the lilies"; "judge not"; "by their fruits ye shall know them"; sonship to the Most High; narrow is the gate that leadeth unto life; "ask, and it shall be given you"; the burden of riches; the Fatherhood of God.

Obedience to this one sermon would make a man prayerful, loving, spiritual, and "perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect." It reveals the brotherhood of man, and our kin-

ship to heaven. The disciple that obeys it has a flight higher than that of the "birds of the heaven," and a raiment more golden than that of the "lilies of the field." He learns that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"; and that the heavenly Father knows what man needs.

The Mount of Beatitudes may not be snow-capped; but it is in one sense so high that only the perfect man can climb it. It is so high that he who has mastered the principles of its great sermon is so near to the heavenly Father that he can feel the beating of the divine heart.

The Mount of Beatitudes is so high that he who reaches its top has risen out of the boggy swamps or lonely wastes of selfishness forever; he has passed out of the stupefying and poisonous carbonic acid gas of infidelity; he has escaped from the metaphysical fogs; and with clear vision and a "pure heart he sees God."

On Mount Sinai only Moses might see God. On the Mount of Beatitudes any one may look.

Mount Sinai spells law. Mount of Beatitudes spells love.

The law of Mount Sinai bristles with negatives, was stony; but would, if obeyed, make the earth a Paradise. The law of the Mount of Beatitudes is mellow with the music of affirmatives, is alive with heavenly pulsations,

and would take earth's paradise, prepared by stony law, and transform it into a spiritual heaven.

Mount Sinai, the mount of Moses' law, was near the Red Sea, the dividing gulf from heathen darkness and sinful oppression; and in a wilderness; and only glared to the Israelites for a short time with deterring lightnings. But the Mount of Beatitudes was in the Promised Land, and shines to this day with the winning smiles of Jesus' love.

MOUNT GILBOA

We leave the Mount of Beatitudes and go southward, leaving the Sea of Galilee on our left. Then we may pass Mount Gilboa, made famous by the death of Saul, the king of Israel. It is this event which prompted the poet Byron to write the "Song of Saul before His Last Battle," in such a way that the poet's genius casts a kind of glamour over the character of this king, who, to the end of his long reign, was like an artless boy, either self-willed and stubborn, or superstitious and chivalrous. Byron makes him speak as follows to his troops before his last battle with the enemies of his country, notwithstanding his flight in Mount Gilboa, and his suicide there:—

"Warriors and chiefs! should the shaft or the sword
Pierce me in leading the hosts of the Lord,
Heed not the corse, tho' a king's in your path:
Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath!

"Thou who art bearing my buckler and bow,
Should the soldiers of Saul look away from the foe,
Stretch me that moment in blood at thy feet!
Mine be the doom which they dared not to meet.

"Farewell to others, but never we part,
Heir to my royalty, son of my heart!
Bright is the diadem, boundless the sway,
Or kingly the death, which awaits us to-day."

But the romantic touch of Lord Byron could not make Mount Gilboa even *seem* to be the scene of events that turned the destinies of mankind, like other mountains mentioned in the Bible. And we tarry only long enough to find in our Bible the curse uttered by David against Mount Gilboa, because of the death there of Saul and Jonathan:—

"Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!
How are the mighty fallen!
Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
Ye mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew or rain upon you, neither fields of offerings:
For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away,
The shield of Saul, as of one not anointed with oil."

MOUNT MORIAH

We resume our journey to the southward, bearing a little to the west, that we may pass Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, celebrated as the mountains over against each other where the Hebrews assembled. Almost between them, in the valley, was probably the well where Jesus met the Woman of Samaria. When she talked about worshiping God in that mountain (Ebal or Gerizim,) Jesus insisted that locality was not the chief element in worship, but "truth and spirit"; for God is spirit.

But let us go down (or up, as the ancients would say) to Jerusalem. It was a city of mountains. The Psalmist (125:1-2) said:—

"They that trust in Jehovah
Are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but
abideth forever.
As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
So Jehovah is round about his people
From this time forth and forevermore."

There we find Mount Moriah, Mount Zion, Mount Calvary and the Mount of Olives. But let us imagine and meditate concerning Mount Moriah.

The name is said to signify that Jehovah

provides, or sees, or chooses. And we fancy that the name may have been given, because on that mountain God provided the victim for the faithful Abraham, whom he had commanded to offer his son as a sacrifice.

Destructive critics have taught that Abraham was mistaken in thinking that God had given this commandment; that Abraham was rather infected by the contagion of the surrounding idolatrous influences; and they have thus done away with revelation in what they call "the story." But we do not follow them. Let those whose lives are comparatively barren in spiritual effectiveness be modest in contradicting statements of spiritual giants concerning experiences and events recorded in honest records preserved by a race of mankind that has produced not merely one religious leader, but a procession of mighty prophets through the ages. They have done things, and known things, and felt things, that critics can no more understand than common mosquitos can comprehend of the working of a steam engine.

On Mount Moriah Abraham, in obedience to God, was about to sacrifice his son, when the angel's call stayed his hand, and another victim was provided. How often God provides for the needy! It could not have been far from Mount Moriah that God provided the "Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world."

But on that spot where Abraham's hand was stayed, the Jews think, stood the altar of burnt offerings of their temple in later years. There was the temple of Solomon. There was the threshing floor where David offered the sacrifice, after he had sinned in numbering the children of Israel; refusing to take the place as a gift from the owner. It is supposed that there stood the temple of Herod, that caused the Jews to boast to Jesus, "forty and six years was this temple in building." The historical associations that may be connected with Mount Moriah, if we have correctly identified the place, are so many that they forbid us to gratify our imagination; and all that we do is to recollect that here trod the feet of Abraham, Isaac, David, Solomon, and generations and generations of worshiping Hebrews, until finally Jesus came and showed the world that God was not confined to a Holy of Holies in a tabernacle or temple, but might be found in the hearts of his children anywhere. And when we think of Jesus as treading and teaching on Mount Moriah, we look over to the eastward, across the Brook Kedron, and see the Mount of Olives, from which Jesus ascended to heaven, from the sight of his wondering disciples. And we will go there before we go to Calvary.

But as we go, thinking of Mount Moriah, the

Mount of Olives, and of Calvary, and how the nations of the earth have sought the law from Jerusalem, we cannot avoid recalling the words of the prophet (Micah 4:1-3) about it, which are yet only in part fulfilled, though they are made the foundation of many Christian anthems sung by choirs in our modern sabbath services to this day:—

"But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

OLIVET

JESUS' GREATEST TEMPTATION

So little does the Holy Land now look like the closely populated country of our Savior's time, that the traveler of our own generation must lose some of the realism of his imagination based on the impressions concerning it derived from the Bible. However, the accounts of modern travelers may help us who do not visit the land, in some degree. How different Jerusalem must seem now from that time when it was so beautiful; before it rebelled, and while a Roman procurator was executive; when Jesus visited the temple that had been forty and six years in building; and where he predicted Jerusalem's overthrow during that generation, so that the disciples, remembering his directions (Luke 21:21), escaped from the Roman maneuvering armies to the mountains, while the thousands of fanatical Jews were cooped up in the city, and during the siege were killed, starved, captured, and crucified!

In the time of Jesus, if one were to go from Mount Moriah down across the Brook Kedron toward the east, he would ascend the Mount of Olives, on whose eastern slope at Bethany

the Savior was a welcome guest on the nights of the last week of his life.

From the summit of the Mount of Olives the Dead Sea may be seen, even the water of it, though distant nearly a day's brisk riding. It is at a level of more than 3,900 feet below: for the Dead Sea lies lower than the ocean. Looking to the westward from the mountain, which is a low ridge of hills, the whole of Jerusalem may be seen. We may easily understand how Jesus, on looking at the city of the Great King, calling to mind the stubborn unbelief of the ecclesiastics there and the coming desolation of the city, would be touched with tender pity. He wept over the coming destruction of Jerusalem, and the self-sufficient egotism of its cultivated citizens. In their times they were "modern" and "progressive," interpreting away the law of God, and making it void by their traditions. The Sadducees even contradicted the prophets, and denied the possibility of a resurrection. They were so learned. But Jesus knew more about human nature than they did, and could see farther into the future than they could; and on the Mount of Olives he wept over Jerusalem.

But it was fitting that the king, whose coming the prophets had foretold, should "suddenly come to his temple," though the prophet (Mal. 3:1) had said a "messenger" would pre-

cede and "prepare the way before him"; and that in some way he should have a triumphal entry into his earthly capital. And this event is described by the Dean of Westminster as follows:—

"Two vast streams of people met that day. The one poured out from the city (John 12:12-13); and as they came through the gardens whose clusters of palm trees rose on the southeastern corner of Olivet, they cut down the long branches, as was their wont at the feast of tabernacles, and moved upward toward Bethany with shouts of welcome. From Bethany streamed forth crowds who had assembled there on the previous night, and who came testifying to the great event at the sepulchre of Lazarus. In going toward Jerusalem the road soon loses sight of Bethany. It is now a rough but still broad and well-defined mountain track, winding over loose rocks and stones, and here and there deeply excavated; a steep declivity below on the left, the sloping shoulder of Olivet above it on the right; fig-trees below and above, growing out of the rocky soil. Along the road the multitudes threw down the branches which they cut as they went along, or spread out a rude matting formed of the palm branches they had already cut as they came out. The larger portion . . . those perhaps who had escorted him from Bethany . . . unwrapped their loose cloaks from their shoulders and stretched them along the rough path to form

a momentary carpet as he approached (Mat. 21:8). The two streams met. Part of the vast mass, turning round, preceded; the other half followed (Mar. 11:9). Gradually the long procession swept round the little valley that furrows the hill, and over the ridge on its western side, where first begins the descent of the Mount of Olives toward Jerusalem. At this point the first view is caught of the southwestern corner of the city. The temple and the more northern portions are hid by the slopes of Olivet on the right; what is seen is only Mount Zion, now for the most part a rough field, crowned with the mosque of David and the angle of the western walls, but then covered with houses to its base, surmounted by the castle of Herod, on the supposed site of the palace of David, from which that portion of Jerusalem, emphatically the city of David, derived its name. It was at this precise point, 'as he drew near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives' (may it not have been from the sight thus opening upon them?) that the shout of triumph burst forth from the multitude, 'Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord' (Mat. 21:9). There was a pause as the shout ran through the defile; and as the Pharisees who stood by in the crowd complained, he pointed to the stones, which, strewn beneath their feet, would immediately cry out if 'these were to hold their peace.' Again the procession advanced. The road descended a slight declivity, and the glimpse of the city was again withdrawn behind the intervening ridge of Olivet. A few moments

and the path mounts again; it climbs a rugged ascent, it reaches a ledge of smooth rock, and in an instant the whole city bursts into view. As now the dome of the Mosque El Aksa rises like a ghost from the earth before the traveler who stands on the ledge, so then must have risen the temple tower; as now the vast enclosure of the Mussulman sanctuary, so then must have spread the temple court: as now the gray town on its broken hills, so then the magnificent city with its background . . . long since vanished away . . . of gardens and suburbs on the western plateau behind. Immediately below was the Valley of the Kedron, here seen at its greatest depths as it joins the valley Hinnom, and thus giving full effect to the great peculiarity of Jerusalem, seen only on its eastern side . . . its situation as of a city rising out of a deep abyss. It is hardly possible to doubt that this rise and turn of the road . . . this rocky ledge . . . was the exact point where the multitude paused again, and 'he, when he beheld the city, wept over it.'"

O mount of sadness, thou mount of Olives!

It would be vain to trust the traditions brought down to our day by ignorant monks concerning the locality of the grave of Lazarus. But the Bible history makes us know nearly the location of Bethany; and we may well reason that somewhere about this mountain was the grave of Lazarus, where "Jesus wept."

But the resurrection triumph, to follow so soon, did not lift the burden off Jesus' heart: for when they made a feast for him in the rich man's house, where Lazarus was a guest of honor, where "Martha served," and Mary brought an alabaster box of precious spikenard, and anointed Jesus and broke the box, he affectionately and sadly said that she had come to anoint him beforehand for his burying ("to prepare me for burial"). Thus he spoke on this Mount of Olives, on whose western side he "wept" over Jerusalem.

Our affections are near our sorrows, and our sorrows are near our affections. On the lower slope of this Mount of Olives, on the Jerusalem side, was the Garden of Gethsemane, where, a few nights later, Jesus began to be "exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death"; and he was "greatly amazed, and sore troubled"; and he "was in agony . . . and his sweat became, as it were, great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." And there he asked his disciples to watch with him; but they fell asleep. He awoke them; but they fell asleep again.

Of course, no one would contend that we are qualified adequately to appreciate the sufferings of Jesus in Gethsemane. But there is more than that to be said: it is likely that few of us can even understand them. As the toad-

stool cannot comprehend the beauty of the rose, or the lion's whelp the patriotism of William Tell, so we sinners cannot understand the horror of the Son of God at being classified as a "blasphemer" by the judgment of his Father's chosen people, and the verdict, "worthy of death," which he received from their high priest and regular officials. Jesus mentally foresaw it all, and in Gethsemane he began to realize its close approach.

In Jersualem he had a few hours before given the bread and the cup to the disciples. And one of them was a traitor. Another was to deny him. All were to forsake him and fly. He was to be "despised and rejected of men." And that he was to "taste death for every man," so mastered his feelings that his disciples partook of his depression, and he felt compelled soon to say to them, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God; believe also in me." Possibly there were signs even then visible to his keen perception, that the disciples were some of them hesitating in their allegiance, in harmony with his own prediction about them, that they should all be "offended in him that night."

Was it to strengthen their waning allegiance that he advised the buying of a "sword" (Luke 22: 36), and they replied, "Lord, behold, here are two swords?" You remember that he said,

"It is enough." Undoubtedly, if Jesus had allowed his disciples to fight for him at Gethsemane, "two swords" would have been enough. For when the Jewish officers came to arrest him at the entrance to Gethsemane, and he asked them, "Whom seek ye?" his very look and voice as he informed them that he was Jesus of Nazareth, and demanded that they let the disciples "go their way," made his enemies shrink backward and fall to the ground. . . . There can be no question that Jesus as a military commander would have led armies to splendid victories.

Then was there a lingering hope in the heart of Jesus that his Father would allow him to make the fight for heaven and righteousness by those agencies that would inspire his disciples with courage? They would have fought for him like lions. If he had allowed them to use the "two swords" his enemies would have fled, and the populace on the morrow would again have acclaimed him "king"; again they would have cried, "Hosanna; blessed is the king that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." If his Father had allowed him to use the swords, he could have made Israel the dominant civil power of the earth. He could have subdued Rome, destroyed pagan temples, proclaimed the one Jehovah, turned all worldly agencies and influences to the side

of righteousness, and made the world again in outward appearance like Paradise. "The kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," would have been on the side of Jesus, with the devil's help hardly visible.

And as Jesus may have thought of these things, although he knew well that to continue such a reign his visible miraculous leadership would (from the human point of view) be needed forever, so that the *kingdom within you* would not so well have developed, he *may* have thought that his Father's wisdom would in some way overcome that spiritual difficulty; God undoubtedly knowing of some other way to whip the world than for "lambs" to conquer "wolves," and for "doves" to conquer "serpents."

Possibly with such lingering hope he may have departed from Jerusalem for Gethsemane, knowing his own tremendous influence with his Father in prayer.

And yet it was with sad depression of spirit that he crossed the brook Kedron, began to ascend the Mount of Olives, and entered the Garden of Gethsemane, followed by a band of half-believing, half-skeptical men, who had for years been enthusiastic adherents, but, after all, were only human, and were likely to forsake him when his power or popularity would seem to wane. In vain he said to them, "Let

not your heart be troubled." They *were* troubled.

But though they were men, they seemed to be the only companions available for him that evening, until he gained his great spiritual victory over his greatest temptation; that in the Garden of Gethsemane.

He left the most of them, telling them to take their seats, while he went still further into the Garden to pray. As he thus went away he asked Peter, James and John to go with him. Sometimes he had gone apart by himself to pray to his Father, not desiring any one with him. He would abide all night in prayer to God. But a greater trial was now before him, and he desired the presence of those he loved. Having loved his own, "he loved them unto the end." And he told them his heart was troubled, that it would be so till his death. He asked them to stay there and watch with him. It was only a little thing for him to ask.

Then he went and prayed that prayer that has penetrated the hearts of his followers for two thousand years: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

But how few of us realize the great burden of that prayer! How the most of us put our interest on the undeniable fact that Jesus was

offering to submit his will to God's will! That is true, of course; no one could deny it. But that was not what Jesus was *especially* praying for. He was praying to be freed from drinking the cup of death, and all the rest of the fatal struggle with sin. Jesus was tempted. How often before this he had prayed to his Father for the same relief we do not know: for he often prayed alone.

We know that God did not grant his prayer: for though he prayed for the "cup" to be "removed," when some time later Peter would have defended him against arrest, Jesus said, "Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

This shows that he was compelled by God to drink the cup; that his prayer was not granted. He was not permitted to use the "swords."

Possibly this "cup" was what he referred to, when he asked the sons of Zebedee, "Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" when they asked for prominence in his kingdom. And the blood of the new covenant he had typified by the "cup" containing the fruit of the vine, only a few hours before; and that "cup" comes down to us.

The temptation that Jesus was going through in the Garden of Gethsemane was the same one, only now it was far more intense

because of the nearness of the time of drinking the "cup," which he experienced at the advice of Peter, shortly after Peter had asserted that he was the Son of the living God. For when Jesus showed his disciples that he "must suffer many things of the elders . . . and be killed," Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee." The temptation to Jesus was so sore that he said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling block unto me."

That cup God had put to his lips: for he was to be tempted in all points. And in Gethsemane he prayed for the removal of the cup.

Gradually the consciousness oppressed him that God was not granting the prayer. And he "began to be greatly amazed," and sore troubled. Hitherto God had always answered his prayers; so that at the grave of Lazarus, when he was about to ask that "Lazarus come forth," he prayed to his Father saying, "Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always."

But men's prayers are not always answered: for they ask for things that God does not desire, or that may not be for human good.

Jesus was now asking for something that was not for human good, and that God did not desire; because, if granted, Jesus could not be

so "highly exalted." And God loved Jesus so much that he wished "that in all things he might have the preëminence" (Col. 1:18).

Hence Jesus prays in vain: a new experience.

To pray to his Father in vain is torture to the Son of God; and he sweats great drops of blood. The disciples see the crimson sweat, from their little distance, before they fall asleep. For Jesus keeps on praying and agonizing. He knows how to pray: to ask for the things he needs; that he desires the most. His suffering becomes so grievous that he prays to be delivered from the hour itself. He cries out, "Abba, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me." It was the "beloved Son," God's boy, saying, "Papa, please"; or, "Please, Papa." ("Though he was a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered."—Heb. 5: 8.)

The disciples enter into his sorrow, though they do not understand its cause; but his prayer is repeated so monotonously, so wearily, that their eyes grow heavy, and they fall asleep, though he had asked them to watch. Heaven seems distant. He comes for companionship to the disciples, and finds them sleeping. He wakes them, and reproaches them. He had only been praying an hour; and could they "not watch one hour"? It was only a little thing he thought he was asking of men.

They neglected him. He had been asking a little thing of his Father. And God seemed to neglect him.

But one hour is not long to pray to God. Jesus had often prayed all night. So he goes back and prays again: the same monotonous prayer. How his holy spirit revolted at the coming accusations against him! How his heavenly experience abhorred the earth experience! In agony he asks if "his soul must be poured out unto death, and he be numbered with transgressors." Must he "be led as a lamb to the slaughter"? Must his soul be "made an offering for sin"? Must he bear so much; must God make him suffer a burden so heavy that it seemed as if all the sinners and criminals of all mankind, for all the ages, had been combining and concentrating their malignant depravity in the coming crime to be worked on him; "the iniquity of us all"?

"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

But the two beings in this case were of like nature; they were divine. Therefore the Son says, "not my will, but thine, be done."

He returns to his disciples. He is bewildered at the dullness of the ear of his Father. A third time he goes to pray. He gives it up. He fully surrenders his will to God, as he said, and as he intended if God would not yield, and

as God knew he would. And how quickly an angel comes to strengthen him for drinking the cup, to be the Lamb of God, the heavenly victim furnished by heaven in the "new covenant," made strong and mighty by his blood!

O mount of sadness, thou Mount of Olives! There Jesus had to pray and watch alone.

But Mount Calvary was hospitable; there thieves suffered along with Jesus; and there a centurion kept guard; there the citizens of Jerusalem "gaped upon" him; there the riff-raff of the city and the rabble of the country, as they passed by, reviled him; and the priests sat down "and watched him there." But on the Mount of Olives Jesus had to pray and watch alone. Elijah was "left alone" (Rom. 11:3).

O mountain of sadness, thou Mount of Olives!

Does this mean that every great life is a tragedy?

No: for God is good. Unto Jesus, the Mount of Olives became the mount of ascension. Because weeks after he rose from the dead he led his disciples out to the Mount of Olives, and while he was instructing them, and reproving them, and commanding them, and loving them, and restraining them, and blessing them, he ascended from their midst to a better home than earth; and angels explained to them that he would come again. They

should see him once more, when their eyes would not be sleepy.

Thou Mount of Olives, thou art not a mountain of sadness. Thou art a mountain of explanation. During the weeks that had passed since the rising of Jesus from the dead, so near the walls of Jerusalem, surely his pierced, but healed and immortal, feet must often have been attracted to the accustomed and loved paths of the mountain where some of his joys and sorrows had been felt. And if, O Olivet, near thy lower slope on the western side, his disciple Judas betrayed him, on thy height he ascended from the midst of his faithful apostles; which made the Mount of Olives no longer a mount of sadness, but a mount of illumination.

CALVARY

CAUSE OF THE CRY, "ELOI"

No man knows the exact location of Mount Calvary. We only assume that it was a hill, because of the word Golgotha, mentioned by Matthew, Mark and John, as meaning "the place of a skull." And yet that word may refer only to some protruding rock, or to some association of thought created by executions of criminals at that place. The phrase "Mount Calvary" is not Biblical; but came into use in the sixth century.

It is not surprising that the exact location is unknown: for a generation later the city was destroyed by the Romans; and centuries later the Emperor Hadrian took care to inclose the reconstructed city with walls built along lines different from the former ones, with a view to obliterating traces of historical localities.

Therefore all that we can reasonably say as to the location of Calvary is that it was probably on the northwestern side of the city of Jerusalem, close to the city entrance, and by a highway leading in from the country.

This obscuring of the location of the material Calvary harmonizes with the administration of God concerning some other material

things. Of Jesus himself, no picture was left. No description of his person, or physical habits, was attempted by either Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Even concerning the crucifixion we are left in ignorance as to some physical points. Not one of the writers makes any attempt to describe, or comment on, the scene. They simply relate the history as witnesses. They make no appeal for pity for Jesus. They do not even hint that the place was sacred.

Have you ever noticed how God concealed the grave of Moses, how even the mountain where he died cannot positively be identified? how, also, we are not sure of the place of Mount Hor, where Aaron died? how the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, the place of Jesus' burial and resurrection, though said to be near to Calvary, is not truly identified? Have you ever noticed how the bread and wine of the communion, which Jesus himself made symbolic of Calvary's central event, so little resemble a dying body and flowing blood, that we naturally, and without effort to reason upon it, recognize the symbol as symbol? Have you noticed how the Mount of Beatitudes (where the Sermon on the Mount was delivered) and the Mount of Transfiguration are not geographically located by the Gospels? Have you noticed that not one of the Bible writers

mentions how tall Jesus was? what was his weight? or what his complexion? or the tone of his voice? or its music, or power?

Why have you not noticed these things, if you are familiar with the second commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee . . . any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them"?

Is it not evident that God was guiding his historians, often preventing their leaving data for relic worship and other forms of idolatry?

If you have never thought of these things in their mutual relation, then be impressed with the following:—(1) For 500 years from the death of Christ, the followers of Jesus had no such thing as a modern crucifix. With all their love of the cross, they placed no image of Jesus on it; (2) The early Christians were so superior to the physical idolatry of our age, that the first known painting of the crucifixion of Christ appears not before the year 586. And about that time, under the decrees of the Roman Emperor Justinian the Great, the true church of the Lord disappeared from civilization, and "fled into the wilderness." The sculptures of the crucifixion, the picturing of the tortured Lord, or the picturing of the descent of the dead body, as well as the pictur-

ing of his fainting under the cross previously, are all foreign to the spiritual practices of the early Christians. And yet they felt that the cross had been transformed by what happened on Calvary, from an emblem of shame to a sign of glory. They worshiped in spirit. It was not necessary for them to bow down before an image, however impressive to a beholder the simulated crown of thorns might be. They made no pilgrimages to Pilate's judgment seat, to the Mount of Beatitudes, nor Mount Calvary. They worshiped in spirit.

They realized that the only way to get to Calvary was to deny themselves, and bear the burdens of practical life, under the influence of the Spirit of God. And now to get to Calvary, you must bear your cross.

Calvary may have been only a "place of a skull" to the thronging Jews in Bible times, hardly as high as the city walls; but it was so high historically, morally and spiritually, that its physical proportions never seem to have been measured by the disciples, who alone would have cared to tell us the truth. It may then have been only a "place of a skull," in passing which, the travelers entering the city were accustomed to jeer the executed victims of Roman justice or Jewish cruelty; but near it was a garden all glorious with flowers of love, faith and hope, because there Jesus rose

from the dead. Death was on the way to the resurrection; the "skull" was on the way to the lilies; Calvary was on the way to the garden; the "darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour" was on the way to the resurrection brightness; the evening was on the way to the morning.

Calvary was a peculiar mountain. Its top might be called "a skull," or a cross, or a bed, or a throne. Jesus' cross became a symbol of character; and though it was a grievous dying bed, it really became a throne. So that the disciples of the Lord were never heard pleading for pity for him as crucified victim; but Paul exultingly exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." And the throne room of this crucifixion glory was Calvary.

Jesus himself imparted this spirit unto his disciples. When he was going to Calvary, he said to the Jewesses of the city, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep for yourselves and your children." And after he had passed Calvary, to Mary, in the garden of resurrection, who did not yet know that he had risen, he said, "Woman, why weepest thou?" And that afternoon, to the disciples dismally wending their way to Emmaus, he said,

"Ought not Christ to have suffered and to enter into his glory?"

Break away for a moment from the spiritual attraction of Calvary, and look at it as a material, historical mountain.

Calvary is remarkable, as we have pointed out, in that no man knows its exact spot; although it is most intimately connected historically with the success of the great founder of a great religion.

Calvary is peculiar, as a place of forgiveness. Jesus said, *of* the impenitent, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He said, *to* the penitent, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Calvary was an assembly place of mixed society. There were priests there; soldiers; countrymen; women, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him; gamblers; members of the sanhedrin (the most dignified and celebrated religious body of the world); loafers, loungers along the highway, deriding the victims they saw at the "place of a skull"; Mary, the mother of the Lord; criminals, crucified with him; rich men, who buried him; high ecclesiastics, who were watching against fraud or rescue; timid disciples; scribes; pagans; Jews; Christians; and the "Lord of glory."

Calvary was a place of peculiar family grouping as to relation. Jesus said to John,

"Son, behold thy mother"; and to Mary, "Woman, behold thy son." A few hours later, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "It is finished. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." From that day John took care of Mary, and God took care of Jesus. (We mention this, because from that hour there was no more humiliation for Jesus. He was even taken down from the cross and buried by wealthy men, and they richly embalmed his body.)

Though Calvary is on the way over the "great divide" separating earth from the River of Life, and though on mountain sides there are usually springs of water and gurgling brooks, the traveler on this "narrow way," climbing the heights toward the crown of immortality, finds the mountain parched and desert. Jesus said, "I thirst." (I think he said it in Greek. Notice the contraction, and the one word.) Calvary was harder for Jesus to climb, than Nebo was for Moses. In his journey the Christian will find some spot, close to the center of popular interest, with the advantages of civilization, where art and culture are at hand, but where the thirsty sufferer, needing something more refreshing than ecclesiastical organization, grand organ music, essay sermons, operatic anthems, stained glass windows, impressive liturgy, and prestige of

wealth or society, will have nothing better offered to him than the sour drink of official proclamation, commandment, provision, or call: for when Jesus said, "I thirst," we learn that "soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar."

Ah! Calvary is a barren spot. It is wise to come to it with spiritual provisions, or with strength based on the food of God's truth.

But if Calvary is a barren spot as to earthly supplies, it is a mountain so lofty, so near to Him who sees the end from the beginning, that it was long visible to seers, though they could not understand it all. Calvary was so high that the Sweet Singer of Israel, looking forward a thousand years, saw it, foretold it, and described it. But I think that even he did not understand it. As historians look back on it, the prophet looked forward to it. We do not understand it all yet.

When Jesus heard the mockery of the chief priests and scribes (learned in the Scriptures) on Calvary, crying up to him, "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross," he answered at the proper moment in Scripture language, not in pitiful wail, but with thunder voice, in the Hebrew language, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." . . . Thus Jesus by four words transformed Calvary into the needed key to unlock the mystery of prophecy.

But mere translation does not unlock it.

Soon he died; but his thunder cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," still echoed in the hearts of the Jews familiar with their Scriptures: for he had quoted "with a great sound" in their own Hebrew language the first words of the 22d psalm, containing the language of David in prophecy, which they all believed referred to the Christ that, when the prophecy was written, David saw in the distant future. And many of the scribes, priests, and Jews, of that vast multitude must have recalled the words of that psalm:—

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani. . . .
"All they that see me laugh me to scorn. . . .
"There is none to help. . . .
"Many bulls have compassed me. . . .
"They gape upon me with their mouths. . . .
"My tongue cleaveth to my jaws. . . .

"Dogs have compassed me:
A company of evil-doers have inclosed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.
They look and stare upon me.
They parted my garments among them,
And upon my vesture do they cast lots."

And when the *younger priests* and scribes recalled those words of the psalm, written confessedly (even in our day) a thousand years previous to the event on Calvary, ...

those words of the psalm, brought to their recollection by the great voice of Jesus before his death, they knew that Calvary was only a station on the great highway of righteousness, which their Messiah was traveling straight from the desert of earth to the metropolis of God. And when the rich men, Joseph and Nicodemus, took the body down and buried Jesus, the *older hardened priests* went to Pilate and warned him against any possibility of blunder by leaving the grave unguarded; in which case, as they said, "The last error will be worse than the first."

That showed that they then knew they had made a mistake.

That cry of Jesus made Calvary a mountain of prophecy; so that the Jews recognized that they had crucified their Christ. And when, a few days later, the report spread about the city that the disciples claimed that he had risen from the dead, and that they had seen him, Jerusalem was stunned; and honest people waited in dread. They feared lest Calvary had become for the Hebrew nation the portal to Sheol.

More days and weeks passed. If there had been the least dishonesty on the part of the disciples, that would have been the time when vigorous concerted movement on their part *for*

their own benefit would have been made. They would have made effort for place, position, or advantage. They might have worked on the fears of the superstitious Pilate, to secure political preferment. Other efforts might have been exerted for their own worldly interest.

But there was no fraud on their part. And it is evident that they had no plan of campaign whatever. Nothing had been done by them for effect. Running to the sepulchre on the resurrection morning, when they heard the reports of the women; gathering that night in a closed room for fear of the Jews; going off about their business to Emmaus; or, half dazed, going fishing to Galilee or elsewhere, they were like sheep, fleeing here and there: and were only rounded up by the voice of their risen Shepherd, expostulating, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe," proving to them his bodily presence, and finally commanding them to "tarry in Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high."

They were thus to "tarry" near to Calvary; near to Gethsemane; near to the Mount of Olives; near to the Roman barracks; near to the headquarters of the priesthood; near to the garden where Jesus had been buried; near to all the sources of information for investigation, and near to the commanding influences of opposition.

And the sheep obeyed their shepherd. They stayed right there, near the wolves, near to Calvary, where the wolves had mangled the Lamb of God.

But now mark:—A few days more, and these frightened disciples, on the streets of Jerusalem, proclaimed the victim of Calvary to be the Christ of the Jewish race. And the effect of their preaching, following the thunder-cry of Jesus from his Calvary throne, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," was that three thousand Jews, on the first day of the preaching, accepted him as their Lord, Savior, King and Christ.

There is no explanation of this tremendous change, except the truth, accepted under the influence of the great prophecy called to their recollection by Jesus' dying cry, deepened by the rumor of his resurrection from the dead, and the investigations concerning it for more than a month.

And yet all of them, preachers and converts, were under the shadow of Calvary.

Ah! Calvary, thou art a lowly hill; but thy summit is not far from the garden of Joseph, the "counselor of honorable estate, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God." . . . . Calvary, thou art a lowly hill; but thou art the vestibule to Paradise (the garden of God.)

. . . . . .

"And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains and be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."

. . . . . .

Amen.

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